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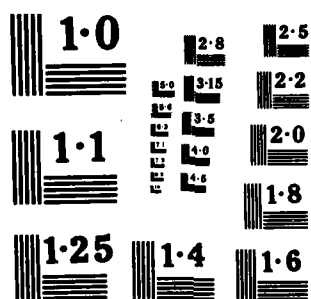
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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

C² SOVIET STYLE - CONTROL AND CONTROL

INDIVIDUAL ESSAY

by

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ABSTRACT

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The relationship between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—the government of the country—and its military is one which is not understood, nor appreciated, by a large segment of the American people. Although the constitution of the USSR guarantees many "individual rights and privileges" and a "representative type government" there are many "qualifiers" which must be viewed in depth. It is the Communist Party which maintains control over all aspects of the government, and the citizenry, through its control over the "nomination" of approved candidates. When the Bolsheviks came to power, they readily gained control of the military and used it as their "control mechanism." To further enhance their "control" over the country, the KGB and Ministry of Internal Affairs were formed to watch over the armed forces and the population. The Party maintains its control with an organizational structure that parallels that of the government and ensures that Party elites, at each level of government and Party, are "dual hatted" with positions in each. Thus it is the Party that in effect controls everything the "representative" government does. Control of the armed forces is maintained in the same manner. Party organizations exist at each level of command throughout the armed forces to "direct" their training and readiness. This is most difficult for us, Westerners, to accept until we realize that most officers, and many other soldiers, are Party members. The ultimate CONTROL of the Party is amplified by the fact that the "will of the people" of the Soviet Union is of minimal concern—it is the "will of the Party" that reigns supreme.

C² SOVIET STYLE - CONTROL AND CONTROL

A controlled society requires a control structure. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) maintains its power through a complex system of controls which has been continuously refined over the past nearly seven decades.¹ Throughout the history of the Soviet Union, since the Bolshevik Revolution, the Party's control has never been seriously challenged.

Centralization of control, according to Soviet writers, was the key ingredient to success during the Second World War and the need to maintain this high degree of control remains today. The Soviet's captive "allies" and their own sizable minorities are vulnerabilities that must be controlled.

The Communist Party is the key to this concept of control and it permeates the entire social and political structures of the Soviet Union. The CPSU is the only elite organization that cuts across all other elites. Not only is the governmental apparatus thoroughly infused and dominated by the Party, every other elite that might effectively compete for influence and power is permeated by Party loyalists. The approximately 18,000,000 members of the Party, only eight percent of the population, includes the decision-makers and opinion leaders in Soviet political, scientific, economic, artistic, and military circles.²

EARLY DAYS OF BOLSHEVIK CONTROL

After storming the Winter Palace and gaining control of the seat of government in November 1917, the Bolsheviks began consolidating their power base. Using the already established underground Red Guards army as the nucleus, Lenin and his Bolsheviks took control of the Stavka (High Command) in

January 1918 and with it the remnants of the czarist army. To ensure that former czarist officers would not foment or initiate counterrevolutionary actions, the military commissar system was formed. These military commissars were trusted Communist Party members who worked with Party cells within the Red Army controlling the work of the military specialists.³ The commissars were principally responsible for ensuring party control over the Red Army and, as parts of that process, began political education for the masses of the soldiers and establishment of a disciplined and loyal force.

The history of the KGB (Committee of State Security) and MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) also date back to 1917 when Lenin directed the establishment of a force to combat counterrevolution and sabotage. The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counterrevolution and Sabotage (Cheka) was approved and formed. Concurrently, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) was also created. Lenin used the Cheka and the NKVD, from the first months of the Soviet state, for the deliberate practice of terror as a system of control and power.

With this power base firmly established and the means to ensure control of the country, the Communist Party was then in the dominant position to ensure its survival.

THE GOVERNMENT

The Soviet government, based upon their Constitution, is not significantly different from our own when addressing the basic structure and election of representatives. Elected Soviets, or councils, represent the masses in their local villages, city or region, district or province, republic, and national levels (Figure 1). The actual day to day operation and decisions, however, are handled by members of corresponding councils of ministers or executive committees at each level who are normally full time employees of the

corresponding level of the CPSU. Elected members of the Soviets are only part-time figurehead representatives which at the national level, the Supreme Soviet, only meet twice a year for periods of approximately three or four days each. The remaining time these representatives labor at their normal profession.

Just as our constitution guarantees certain rights, the Soviet Constitution includes one complete chapter which is dedicated to democratic rights. The constitution guarantees the right to vote, work, rest, material security in old age and sickness, and education. Additionally, equal rights for women and all citizens, freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, press, assembly and meetings, processions and demonstrations, political organization, the inviolability of the person, home and correspondence and asylum to foreign citizens are guaranteed. Along with these rights there are concurrent constitutional obligations. These obligations include the requirements to observe the constitution and laws, safeguard socialist property and perform military service.

As in most Western countries, all Soviet citizens over the age of 18, not insane or convicted of a crime, are entitled to (and quite frankly expected to) vote directly for members of the legislative bodies at each level of government, to include the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The major difference, of course, is the fact that the CPSU is the only Party. Figure 2 demonstrates the Party structure and the flow of power throughout that structure.

Parallelism

Within the Party--State--Government triumvirate, the Party clearly reigns supreme. The system is carefully organized to ensure the impotency of the state, the administrative effectiveness of the government and the complete

STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

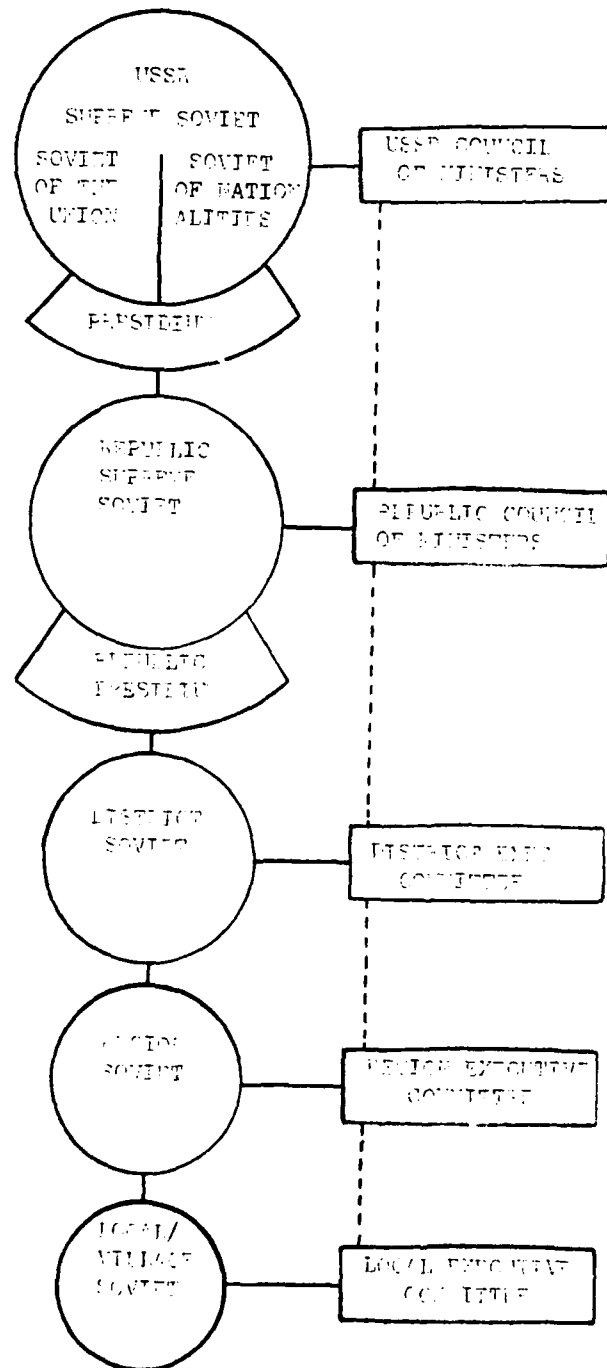


Figure 1

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION (CPSU)

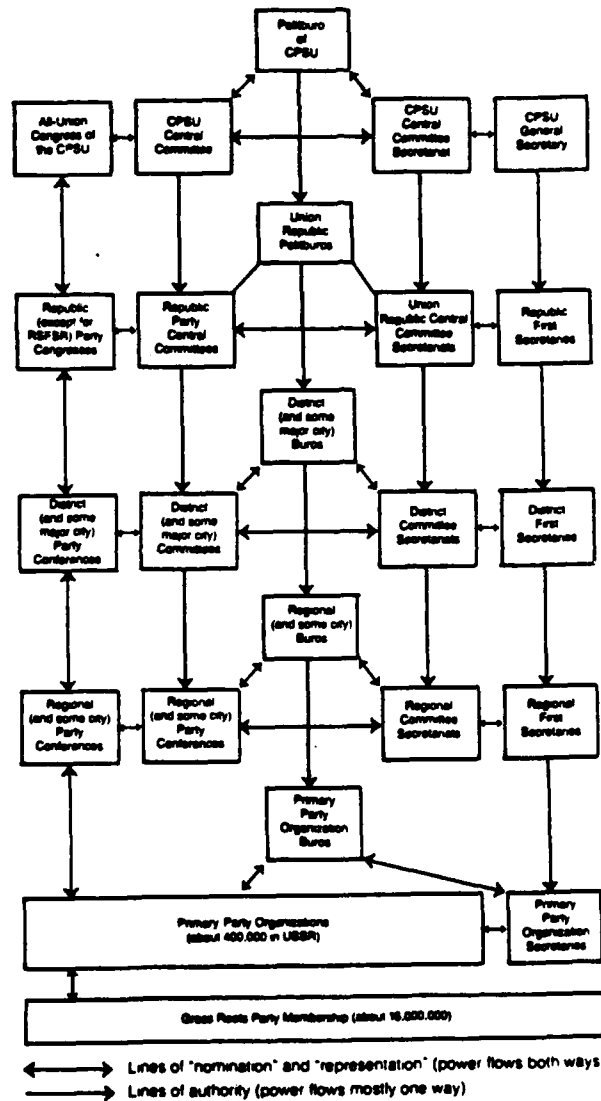


Figure 2

supremacy of the party.⁴ The CPSU and the state governmental hierarchy, as eluded earlier, parallel at each level from the local community through the national government. Not only do these organizations parallel one another, there is decided overlap in that numerous "power figures" hold positions of authority and responsibility simultaneously in the various structures. Just one example of this point is sufficient: Mikhail Gorbachev is—(1) a full voting member of the CPSU Politburo; (2) General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Secretariat; (3) Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet; and (4) Chairman of the USSR Council of Defense (a position which carries with it the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union). In the first two positions he is an elite in the midst of the CPSU elites, and the second two positions represent him as the elite of both the government and the military.

The "arrangement" of the positions held by Gorbachev at the national level to insure Party control is duplicated at each and every lower level of government throughout the Soviet Union.

Figure 3 clearly shows the parallel nature of the Governmental and Party organizations. To further amplify the cross membership in these two structures, Figure 4 demonstrates the interlocking membership between the top organizations of the CPSU and the bodies of national government. In a majority of these Party and government positions the names and faces are the same.

A closer look at the "election" process is in order here to amplify the control actually exercised by the Party.

Candidates for the various Soviets are controlled by what appear to be very obvious restrictions. The first being that no independent candidate is possible since each candidate must be proposed by a section of the Communist Party or by some "recognized" social organization such as a trade union, factory or farm collective, Komsomol (The Young Communist League), or cultural society. The second major restriction is the fact that only one Party—the

departments permeating every level of Army, Naval and Air Force life in the Soviet armed services and even beyond. It extends its strictly military function to being responsible for Aeroflot, the 'State' airline. The Party regards Aeroflot as a support division of its armed forces, with aircraft always available to carry troops anywhere in the world. A third of the 80,000 soldiers involved in the Afghanistan invasion were carried by Aeroflot and not by military aircraft. Thus Aeroflot qualifies for the attention of the Third Directorate. Throughout the armed forces this division of the KGB has skeined a spider's web of informants.

The Politburo of the Soviet Union regards the loyalty of its armed forces as essential and vitally important. The Third Directorate ensures that loyalty."¹²

The Border Guards are a uniformed armed force of the KGB providing control over the population. "The Directorate actually constitutes a special military force, equipped with artillery, armor, and patrol ships. Its personnel, estimated to number between 300,000 and 400,000, are deployed along Soviet frontiers, where they are concerned equally with keeping foreign intruders out and with keeping Soviet citizens from escaping."¹³ Considerable sections of the border area are plowed to ensure footprint identification. Guard towers and searchlights are used extensively to maintain a constant vigil.

It is readily apparent that the KGB, in its entirety, is the elite of the elite control organizations utilized by the Communist Party to ensure their preeminence and continued maintenance of their form of "government."

SUMMARY

The Soviet Union today is a political culture which blends some traditional Russian attitudes and fears with Communist ideology. It is the

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Committee of State Security (KGB)

The KGB, contrary to popular belief, is not a department or ministry of the government of the Soviet Union, but rather works directly for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Common Western perceptions of the KGB are related to the world of undercover agents spying on other governments and, through espionage, stealing state secrets and high technology. This is, in fact, one major area of responsibility, but there are many more as shown by the organizational diagram at Figure 9.

I will not attempt to address the KGB in its entirety, but rather concentrate on those elements which provide the "control" mechanisms of the CPSU.

The Second Chief Directorate, responsible for internal security, concentrates its efforts on (1) attempting to entrap and suborn foreign diplomats in the Soviet Union and controlling their contact with Soviet citizens; (2) maintaining constant surveillance on any Russian who attempts to make contact with a foreign embassy; (3) observe the activities of foreign embassies, both internal to the Soviet Union and around the world; (4) observe the activities of foreign journalists in Moscow; and (5) controlling the daily life of the Soviet people through the use of extensive informant network reports.

In 1969, the Politburo was confronted by what had previously been the unthinkable—open dissidence. To cope with this the Fifth Chief Directorate, responsible for political, religious and ethnic dissent, was formed. As would be suspected, this directorate concentrates its efforts on, and goes to extreme lengths to infiltrate and purge the dissident movements.

It is the KGB Services—or Third—Directorate that is the Politburo's "watchdog" and principal control mechanism over the armed forces of the Ministry of Defense. The KGB Services Directorate is divided into twelve

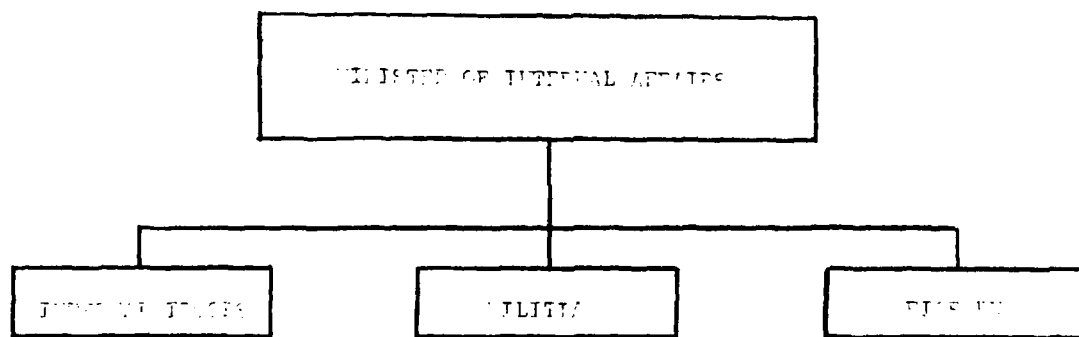


Figure 8

I will address them separately, as they are currently structured.

Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD)

The MVD provides the "routine" control mechanisms throughout the Soviet Union. It is organized, as shown in Figure 8, into three uniformed departments. In essence the MVD provides a national police and uniformed fire-fighting capability to the government of the Soviet Union.

Internal Troops are equipped with jeeps, armored vehicles and light aircraft. It is the organization that performs such functions as guarding forced labor camps and ensuring the safe transport and storage of scarce agricultural products.

"The Soviet militia, performing a variety of police duties, is the basic instrument of public order in the USSR. One of its more observable tasks is that of checking to ensure that Soviet citizens are carrying their internal passports. Other duties include the inspection of automobiles and the control of traffic. As a general rule they do not carry arms, although armed units (normally the Internal Troops) can be summoned quickly."¹⁰ The militia does have its own political officers who perform a "training" function. They, are (as is any other organization in the Soviet Union) kept under the watchful eye of the KGB to ensure loyalty to the CPSU and its control over the State.

Firemen of the MVD, are uniformed and perform as firemen during peacetime. They are organized following the typical Soviet military structure and trained to "be ready to protect the Motherland and to carry out the tasks of Civil Defense, since firefighting service is one of its basic parts."¹¹

political education, combat duty and military service, and the handling of military equipment and weapons. Party organizations in the armed forces further are charged to ensure that Communists play the leading role in the sphere of training and service and influence all aspects of life and activity in the unit."⁹

Conceptually, this is difficult for those of us in the West to accept because it appears that the Party is directly interfering with the commander in purely military matters. The one thing we must remember is that most officers and others in positions of responsibility and authority are themselves Party members. Thus, the relationship is more readily understood, if not accepted.

Whether we accept this control over the armed forces, or not, is moot. The fact remains that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has a well defined structure through which absolute control of the armed forces is maintained.

NON-MINISTRY OF DEFENSE FORCES

The Bolsheviks were not convinced that the Red Army, as it had transformed from the Czarist Army, provided them and their Communist Party the security they required to remain in power and further enhance their position. As stated earlier, the history of the KGB and MVD date back to 1917 when Lenin directed the establishment of a force to combat counterrevolution and sabotage. It was these two establishments which provided the power base of the Communist Party and maintained its control through the practice of terror and coercion.

Throughout the history of the Soviet Union, the specific structure and the names of these two organizations have varied and they were even combined for short periods of time BUT their mission never waived.

Structure of the Party-Political Apparatus of a Regiment

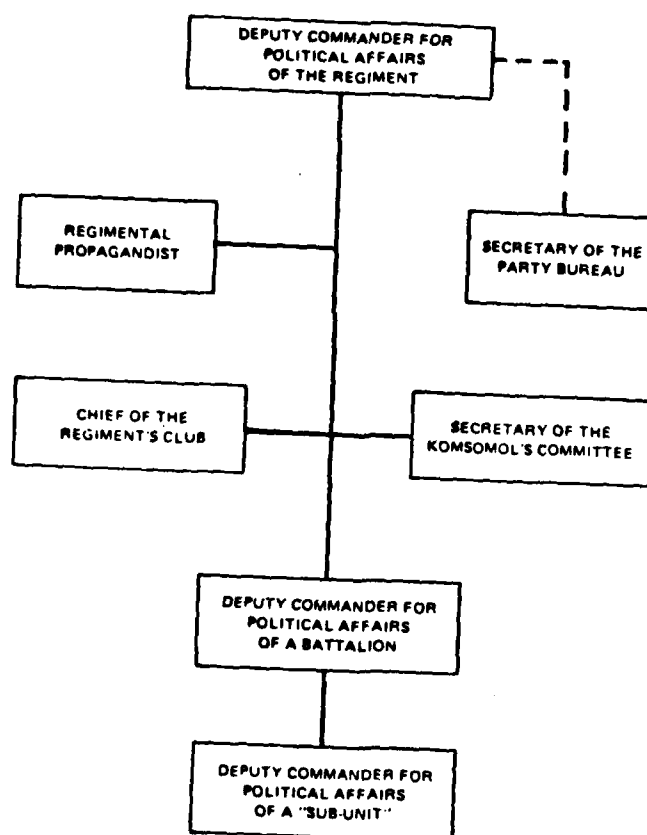


Figure 7

The Structure of Political Organs in the Soviet Army and Navy

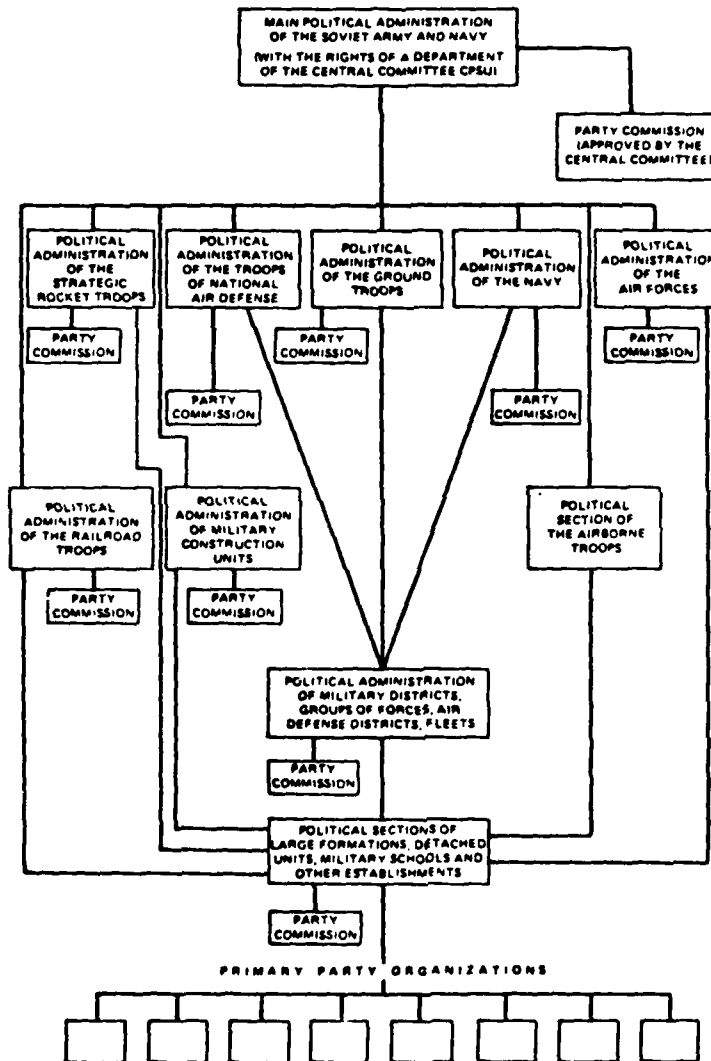


Figure 6

Organization of the Soviet Armed Forces.

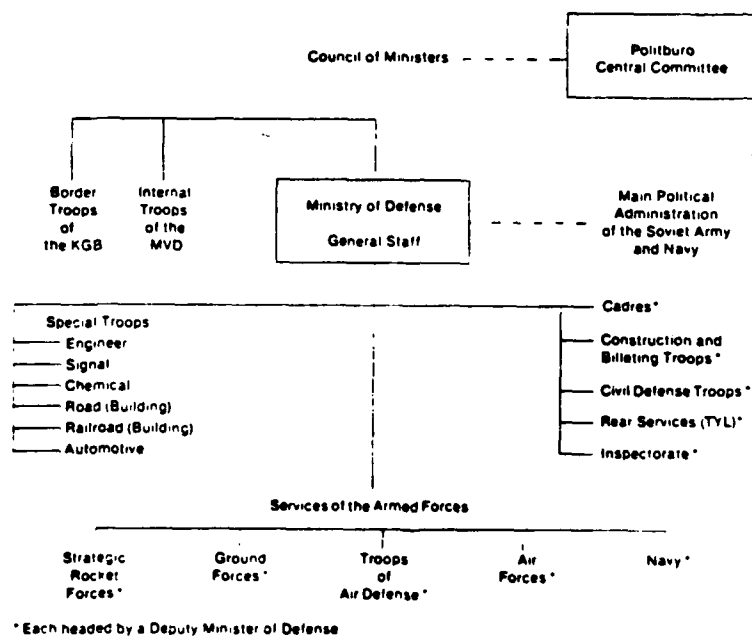


Figure 5

rear, the transformation of the country into a single armed camp, and firm leadership of the forces.

Figure 5 shows the basic overall structure of the Soviet Armed Forces. The troops of the KGB and MVD will be addressed in a later section. Of principle interest here is the relationship of the Main Political Administration (MPA) of the Soviet Army and Navy to the Ministry of Defense. It is through this organization that the Central Committee of the CPSU guides the Party—political work in the armed forces. Since 1960 the MPA has been empowered by the Central Committee to issue directives. Basic directives on Party—political work are signed by both the Minister of Defense and the Chief of the MPA whereas instructions and decrees on day-to-day activities are issued only in the name of the Chief, MPA.⁷

The MPA "is the channel through which the Party influences all aspects of the armed forces' life and activity, enhances their combat readiness, strengthens military discipline, raises the personnel's political level and boosts their morale."⁸ This "channel" is shown in Figure 6. As can be seen, the expanse of political organs throughout the armed forces makes it all encompassing. To further demonstrate this expanse, the structure of the Party political apparatus within a Soviet regiment is at Figure 7.

Party organizations within the armed forces are described as among the most militant detachments of the CPSU. As discussed previously, their work is based upon directions issued by the Minister of Defense and the Chief, MPA under guidance provided by the CPSU Program and Rules and by decisions of the Party congresses and conferences by the Central Committee of the CPSU. The responsibilities of these Party organizations include directing the soldiers "efforts toward maintaining vigilance and combat readiness at a high level, carrying out, in exemplary fashion, the tasks relating to combat training and

of the armed forces to their cause. This was the beginning of the system, in place today, which I will address in some detail—the Party—Military relationship.

The Communist Party is the heart and sole of politics in the Soviet Union; therefore, Lenin's formula that "war is the continuation of politics by other (that is, violent) means, carried out by the ruling class of (a) country" dominates the rationale that the Central Committee of the CPSU be directly involved in the day-to-day control of Soviet military affairs.⁶

The Soviet Officers' Handbook states that the Communist Party's leadership of the Armed Forces (Army and Navy) is expressed in four ways.

First, by the fact that all questions relating to the defense of the socialist Fatherland, military development, military theory and practice are, as they were in the past, resolved in strict accordance with Party ideology and policy, on the basis of directives and instructions formulated in resolutions of congresses and plenary meetings of the Central Committee of the Party and the Politburo of the Central committee of the CPSU.

Second, the Communist Party's leadership of the Armed Forces is expressed in the fact that its Central Committee is directly concerned with questions relating to their life and activities, determines the principal trends and challenges of their development and takes care of the reinforcement of their fighting power, discipline, and solidarity.

Third, the Communist Party's leadership of the Armed Forces is manifested in the fact that there is a well balanced system of political organs, Party, and Komsomol organizations within them. These carry out extensive educational and organizational work in the forces.

Fourth, the leading role of the Communist Party in the Armed Forces is manifested in the fact that during the trials of war, the Party, by its policy and military-organizational activities, ensures the unity of the front and the

In agreeing on a general candidate the participants in the precinct pre-selection meeting proceed from the fact that the nomination of several candidates for the electoral division would result in the opposing of one candidate to another, thus breaking up the bloc of Communist and non-Party candidates. And the Soviet people are certainly interested in retaining and strengthening this unity, as in it is to be found the source of the strength of our society, the basis of all the successes of the Soviet people in the building of communism.

The system, as it operates, maximizes and probably seriously distorts public support for the government. Nevertheless the 99 percent plus of the electorate which votes for (or does not vote against) the official candidate is hailed as clear proof of the unity of Soviet society.⁵ Soviet writer, Yu. K. Filonovich put it this way:

The dazzling victory of the Party and non-Party bloc in Soviet elections is a clear expression of the monolithic cohesion of the Soviet people, of its faith, love, and devotion to the Communist Party and to the Soviet Government, to its wholehearted readiness to march behind the Party along the road to communism.

ARMED FORCES OF THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

When gaining and maintaining control of any country control of the armed forces of that country is crucial to the success of the individuals and organization attempting to rule. As indicated earlier, this is precisely what Lenin and his Bolsheviks accomplished during their seizure of Russia. Through the establishment of the military commissar system, they "ensured the loyalty"

CPSU—can nominate. Other, and at times more subtle, restrictions operate in actual practice at all levels of government. The Communist Party does not make all nominations, but, as a minimum it performs a "screening" function. At lower levels this function is performed through tight control over a pre-selection or nomination meeting. Control at the national level (Supreme Soviet) where the electoral units are larger, is exercised by the Party dominating the various organizations which have the right or "privilege" of nominating individual candidates. If these measures should prove inadequate, the various electoral commissions, in which Party loyalty and control is unquestioned, have the authority to refuse to register an "undesirable" candidate and ensure that only one candidate remains for each position when ballots are printed. This does not mean that every candidate is a Party member, but he/she must be acceptable to the Party.

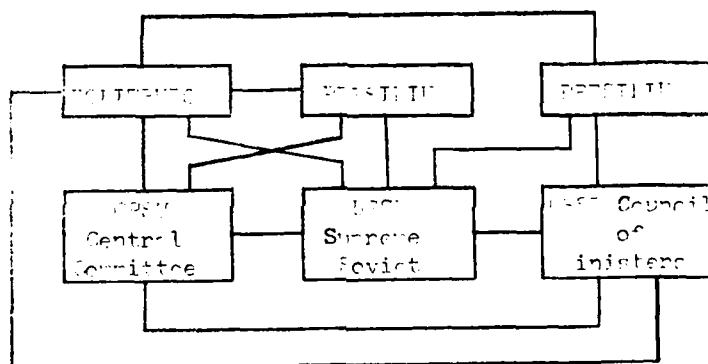
In addressing the phenomenon and rationale for the electoral system, Soviet writers have taken various approaches.

N. G. Starovoitov wrote in 1961:

It is well known that neither the Soviet Constitution nor the Electoral Regulations exclude the right of nominating and registering several candidates for the same electorate. However, because of the actual composition of the social organizations and workers' societies, they nominate and put forward to the precinct electoral commission as a rule only one candidate, but if they have nominated two or more candidates (and this has in fact happened in past elections) then the other candidates will withdraw their candidatures in favour of one candidate.

A freer ballot in the Soviet Union probably would provide the leadership with something less than unanimous support. This does create a degree of fear on their part as shown in the following editorial from Investia, the official government newspaper, in 1958:

SCHEMATIC OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTY AND STATE POLITY



Note: Overlapping between the Council of Ministers and its Presidium and the Supreme Soviet Presidium is prohibited by the Politburo.

Figure 4

institutional framework of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which enables the self-chosen and self-perpetuating elite to maintain a monopoly over decisionmaking. Indoctrination of the masses stresses the legitimacy of the Party's decisions and control is maintained through numerous elements of the government, but principally through, or from, the Party structure. From the early days of Lenin and his Bolsheviks, control over the population was maintained through the threat of terror and physical force. This remains the case today and the vehicles/organizations for perpetuating this have changed little.

The relationship of party to State in the Soviet Union is now quite clear. The CPSU is superior to the state and it directs the "socialist revolution" which is an ongoing phenomenon. The organs of government are regarded only as a means of communicating with the masses and creating the climate of being representative of their needs through the Soviets. This "representative" government is "elected" by a voter turnout which is typically a startling 99 percent. This, is of course, impressive until you take note of the extreme pressure brought to bear by the regime to obtain universal consensus, or more correctly, lack of expressed opposition. In reality, the principal function of the Soviet electoral process is nothing more than a mass rally in favor of the regime rather than an exercise of popular sovereignty.¹⁴

The unity and purpose of the activity of all organs of the Soviet state and especially that activity of the leading organs of power, which provide the directing force of the state, is the Communist Party.

The Red Army, predecessor of today's Soviet armed forces, was the organization through which the Communist Party came to power. The Party was then, and remains today alert to the need to maintain control over the armed forces. A variety of means are employed by the CPSU to exercise this control:

(1) top military leaders are also senior Party leaders with seats on the Central Committee; (2) political officers hold deputy positions at virtually all levels of command; (3) the Main Political Administration, working directly under the Central Committee of the CPSU, guides indoctrination training and other activities; and (4) the KGB is assigned down to company level to report any "evidence of ideological deviation" back up through their own chain of command.

The top Soviet leaders, no matter what governmental position they may hold, are members of the CPSU. They have reached these positions of power because they are first, and foremost, trusted members of the Party and secondly, have probably demonstrated some degree of management capability. It becomes evident that the Communist Party dominates and controls all aspects of Soviet life, from industry to military science, technology, and even the arts and culture. CONTROL of all begins, and in the Soviet Union remains, at the very top with the elite of the Communist Party.

CONTROL of this nature is such that major "problems" of a democracy, such as our own, are not experienced by the leadership of the Soviet Union. The national objectives of the State, as determined by the Central Committee of the CPSU, are transmitted to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet for implementation and there is never the question of the "will of the people" of the Soviet Union—it is the "Party's will" that reigns supreme in their CONTROLLED society.

ENDNOTES

1. Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, The Soviet Control Structure: Capabilities for Wartime Survival, p. 1.
2. Steve F. Kime, CDR, USN, "How the Soviet Union is Ruled." Air Force Magazine, March 1980, p. 3.
3. Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, The Armed Forces of the USSR, p. 4.
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5. L. G. Churchward, Contemporary Soviet Government, p. 108.
6. Scott, The Armed Forces of the USSR, p. 113.
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8. A. Y. Khmel, Education of the Soviet Soldier: Party-Political Work in the Soviet Armed Forces, p. 37.
9. Scott, The Armed Forces of the USSR, p. 273.
10. Scott, The Soviet Control Structure: Capabilities for Wartime Survival, p. 92.
11. Ibid., p. 94.
12. Brian Freemantle, KGB—Inside the World's Largest Intelligence Network, p. 55.
13. John Barron, KGB Today—The Hidden Hand, p. 451.
14. John A. Armstrong, Ideology, Politics, and Government in the Soviet Union, p. 158.

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